



United States Senator
Richard Shelby
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



Why We Fight

By: Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)

Today, we mark the fifth anniversary of September 11th, a day no American will ever forget. Five years ago, our nation was forever changed by brutal terrorist attacks on our homeland. We remember the innocent men, women, and children who lost their lives that day, the heroes who risked their lives to save others, and our brave servicemembers who fight today to preserve our great nation's security and freedom.

Although difficult, we must not forget the terrorists who were behind the attacks. Those individuals who brought terrorism to our backyard in a surprise attack on our nation not seen since Pearl Harbor. These terrorists threaten the very freedom America represents and they seek to impose their tyranny and terror around the globe. And they must be defeated.

In the wake of the September 11th attacks, the United States remains determined to face the threat and resolute to defeat the terrorists. The U.S. is working closely with its allies to better integrate intelligence and security mechanisms in order to prevail over terrorists and the states and organizations sustaining them. Since September 11th, countless terrorist plots against the United States and our allies have been foiled, most recently the arrest of 24 people in London linked to a plot to destroy passenger aircraft over the Atlantic Ocean. The United States, working in concert with our allies, has disrupted al Qaeda's terrorist network and has degraded its ability to organize operations, transfer money, travel, communicate, and recruit.

These global efforts have led to the capture or death of three-quarters of al Qaeda's leadership, including the death of the operational mastermind of the al Qaeda network in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and the recent arrest of the number two al Qaeda leader in Iraq, Hamed Jumaa Farid al Saaydi. We have been successful at compromising al Qaeda's ability to plan and carryout a large-scale attack. Most

notably, there has not been an attack on the U.S. homeland since September 11, 2001. But we must not rest on our laurels. Numerous attacks around the world are proof that the threat still exists.

Our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq are critical to our continued success in prosecuting the Global War on Terror. Working closely with U.S. forces, these two nations are continuing to lead the way in destroying al Qaeda sanctuaries. Pakistan is now a key ally in the War on Terror and played an important intelligence role in disrupting the recent London plot. The U.S. and our allies realize that full cooperation is essential to identify and destroy the terrorist threat that faces us all.

Critics of U.S. defense and foreign policy are out there – those who say that the terrorist attacks outside the United States are retribution for our military operations abroad. But let me remind you that the United States did not provoke al Qaeda in its desire to destroy our nation and Western culture. The U.S. was not engaged in military actions in the Middle East when we were attacked on September 11, 2001. There was no war in Iraq or Afghanistan, when terrorists attacked the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, the World Trade Center in 1993, the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, our African embassies in 1998, or the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000.

As we continue to fight to rid the world of terrorists, we must remember that if the terrorists are not defeated abroad, then the fight may once more come to our homeland. While our involvement in the War on Terror continues to be difficult, our resolve must remain strong. We simply cannot wait to be attacked again. We must take the fight to the enemy and not let the enemy bring the fight to us. Let our enemies never doubt that we will continue to pursue them wherever they may hide, and we will not stop until our victory is complete.

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